



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Commission on Disability

MEETING MINUTES

May 14, 2012

Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Candace Havens
Director
Planning & Development

Community Development
Senior Planner

Members

Rob Caruso, Co-Chair
Girard Plante, Co-Chair
Jane Brown
Lucie Chansky
Jini Fairley
Rosemary Larking
John Lojek
Barbara Lischinsky

Members Present:

Jane Brown
Rob Caruso, Co-Chair
Girard Plante, Co-Chair
Lucie Chansky
Jini Fairley
Rosemary Larking (7:45)

Staff Present:

Nicole Tocci, Inspectional Services
Alice Walkup, Senior Planner, Community Development
Anne Marie Belrose, Manager, Community Development

Guests:

Heather Platt
Bob Hatchey
Meg Robertson
Kristen MCosh

Regrets:

Barbara Lischinsky
John Lojek

Meeting:

Rob Caruso called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Minutes:

J. Brown made a motion to approve the minutes from the April. 9, 2012 meeting and J. Lojek seconded the motion.

2. CDBG Report

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Alice Walkup presents CDBG report; she begins with going over the new handles on the doors in City Hall of part of the City Hall improvements that will be taking place.

L. Chansky inquires about wages of who will be doing the Community Service Center project.

A. Walkup says they have to pay prevailing wages & that they might have to move funds around and or find the funds to pay for the Community Center project.

3. Lift project at City Hall

Anne Marie Belrose gives an update on the City Hall lift project & explains about the funding for the project & the procedure of re-allocating the \$80,000 from Housing to the lift project at City Hall. The lift would be recommended by COD, then Housing then would be brought in front of the Planning Department Board then presented to the Mayor & the Newton partnership, after the vote there is a 30 day comment period before funds can be expended.

The project was to be voted on at the last Newton Partnership meeting, but they did not meet the required quorum to make a vote. By law if the members find the circumstances exigent enough they can still take a vote even if the quorum is not made. The members did not feel that the 5 month time period to get the funds an example of exigent circumstances.

R. Caruso asks if the order of procedures mentioned above have to been in that order or if there was a way when funds were needed that it wouldn't have to go through the lengthy process. The answer was yes at this time they have to follow the procedures the way they are set.

L. Chansky asks for a refresher of exactly where the lift will be going.

J. Lojek explains where it will be going in the War Memorial and about the access and availability of the lift to Newton Residence and any who need the access.

Anne Marie Belrose asked the Commission on Disability if they will support the City Hall Lift Project while internally they figure out what the next step is.

John Lojek made a motion to support project to put a lift in City Hall for access to the War Memorial. Lucie Chansky seconded the motion, the motion carried unanimously.

L. Chansky, R. Caruso & J. Brown all voiced their opinion on the acoustics in the War Memorial saying the city should invest in a new sound system seeing the majority of meetings are held in the War Memorial.

G. Plante thinks the War Memorial should be closed until the lift installed and there is safe access to and from the War Memorial.

4. Standardized APS Discussion with Guests Bob Hatchey, Heather Platt, Meg Robertson and Kristen McCosh

R. Caruso begins with the introduction of the different APS tones & devices in the City of Newton and other city's as well.

Kristen McCosh a guest from the City of Boston asks that any of the members/staff that know about the APS devices in Newton to elaborate on those systems.

A. Walkup describes the devices that are used new & old with the some of the new ones having locator tones and a tone to cross the street.

Rob Hatchey a guest from Bay State Council of the Blind says that a lower tone is better than a higher tone for the hearing impaired and Meg Robertson says that speech on the devices is not recommended.

Kristen McCosh talks about how when someone calls the City of Boston and makes a suggestion and or request of where an APS device and curb cut retro-fit is needed it is highly likely that the request will be granted. The City of Boston uses two different companies; one company does the installation and a different company to do the maintenance. Boston has 26 new systems going in this year. New York retrofits approximately 25 a year.

Heather Platt & Meg Robertson a guest from the Mass Commission for the Blind made everyone aware that APS device installments are a requirement for all new walkways/ curb cuts and also where ever there is a visual walk sign.

They also brought up that the tone called chirp is no longer allowed, any natural noise like a bird is confusing and can be miss represented as an okay to cross.

Newton also has two companies that are used for repairing and installing APS devices.

J. Lojek asked Kristen McCosh if it was possible to use one company product/equipment for all APS's so we can assure universality. She informed J. Lojek and the COD that when a job goes out to bid they have to take the lowest bidder.

Rob Hatchey highly recommends that one company check existing signals periodically, he suggested every three months and if needed that the system is fixed within a certain time period.

Everyone agreed that a walk signal should be loud enough to be heard over traffic (ambient noise) and also that curb cuts be standardized, tact tone and width, the same as what is being suggested for the APS.

A. Walkup asked Kristen McCosh where the money comes from for installation, retrofit and design of the APS devices. The response was there is a 250,000 capital budget and she has an architect on her staff that recommends the APS's for all new curb cuts. Installations by priority are in this order

1. Residences
2. Traffic
3. Busses & t stops
4. Government Buildings
5. Housing

R. Caruso asked J. Lojek if the City of Newton is installing APS devices where they are supposed to be with all the new road work that is taking place throughout the city. J. Lojek said that yes they are as is required.

A. Walkup sets it up so that everyone can listen to the different APS tones that are available.

L. Chansky asked if each device comes with all the tones. Heather Platt and Meg Robertson said that yes the tones are already programmed in the devices and can be changed, the tones are crossing tones not locator tones.

J. Fairley asked if she could see it in writing somewhere that it states, if there is a visual walk signal at a crosswalk that an APS signal is required.

Meg Robertson said that what J. Fairley is asking is complicated, the wording states that all new retrofitting and new construction needs an APS installation and should be funded through capital funding.

The Commission and guests had a discussion on curb cuts, new and old installations and the colors being used. Newton has a stamp that they use to use that was cost effective but not labor effective, all new installations at major intersections and places with higher traffic have a yellow plastic pad, a red stamp is used in residential areas.

5. Meeting with the Mayor

R. Caruso, G. Plante and J. Lojek met with the Mayor to discuss how to better the communication between the COD and the Mayor's office and all other departments in City Hall. The Mayor suggested that they have a monthly meeting to help with communicating with each other and to keep him informed of what is going on with the Commission on Disability.

PS&T approved \$100 for the HP fines even though the Commission had voted unanimously on a \$200 fine. Jay Ciccone pulled item from docket before it went

to finance so the PS&T can properly be informed of what the Commission voted on.

The question on whether the Police have the right to ticket private lots, hospitals and private property came up and the Law Department informed them that yes the Police Department has the right to give out tickets since it is mandatory for private property that is open to the public to have handicapped parking. The Police have the right to ticket anything that has public access.

6. Old/New Business

R. Caruso brings up the fact that The Parish of St. Paul is beyond the bicycle lane and we the Commission can recommend an HP spot or drop off only spot which they had put off voting at the last month's meeting because of the installation of the new bicycle lane on Walnut St. that will prohibit parking where lane will go.

J. Lojek made a motion to approve space as either a drop off space or HP space, R. Larking seconded the motion and vote carries unanimously.

R. Larking brought up that the Newton Free Library does not have the two computer mouse and key pads that were paid for through CDBG funding and that the public computer table is not adjustable for handicap access.

J. Lojek said he would take a walk over to the library and look into the mouse, pad & table situation and let the Commission know his findings at the next meeting.

7. Adjourn

J. Lojek made a motion that the meeting be adjourned and R. Larking seconded the motion.

